

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

It is more of the same hypocrisy, which is severely damaging and dividing our country, that Sinclair would choose to preempt Nightline as Ted Koppel read the names of our beloved sons and daughters killed in service in Iraq. Reading these names, they claimed, was a "partisan attempt" to affect political perceptions in this country. Reading those names, however, was simply the truth of what happened.

Now, however, two weeks before the presidential election, Sinclair is obviously engaging themselves in partisan politics (which they previously criticised) with our publicly owned airwaves, which is clearly in violation of laws regarding electioneering at taxpayers' expense.

Sinclair's subsidiary is an investor in Jadoo, who produces self-contained power systems for the war on Terror. Therefore we see a very serious conflict of interest in their using publicly owned airwaves to broadcast their opinions as news reports.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.